

## **MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS FINAL PROJECT PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**GRANT TITLE:** Wolf Conservation and Management Plan for Montana  
**AGREEMENT:** T - 6 - 1  
**PERIOD COVERED:** March 10, 2002 through June 30, 2006

### **Objective**

The objective of this grant is to complete the process of developing and formally adopting a wolf conservation and management plan for Montana.

### **Location**

Statewide

### **Accomplishments**

#### **Montana Wolf Conservation and Management Plan**

During the grant period, FWP completed the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. FWP Director signed a Record of Decision. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) approved the Montana state plan and state laws as providing adequate regulatory mechanisms to secure wolf recovery into the future.

In May 2004, Director Hagener amended his Record of Decision to select an alternative that allowed FWP to assume wolf management responsibilities despite the delay in delisting in the tri-state area. This step paved the way for FWP and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to complete an interagency cooperative agreement in July 2005. A series of FWP press releases is included to document each of these stages.

- Spring 2003 - Fall 2004: FWP held 2 rounds of community work sessions throughout Montana to gather public comments. The first round was to gather comments on issues that needed to be addressed in the draft EIS. The second round was to gather public comments on the proposed alternative, which was the option based on the work of the Montana Wolf Advisory Council. Approximately 10,000 total comments were received in the two comment periods.
- FWP met with the Montana Wolf Advisory Council (a diverse citizen's group originally appointed in 2000) several times during the grant period to review and discuss public comments during the preparation of the EIS. FWP also met with the advisory council to gather their input prior to amending the Record of Decision and taking over the program.
- FWP and the Service completed the interagency cooperative agreement in July 2005 that officially transferred legal authority and leadership to the state of Montana. The agreement allows FWP to implement as much of the approved state plan as possible and to the extent allowed by federal regulations for the southern Montana experimental area and the Northwest Montana endangered area.

#### **Additional Outreach**

During the grant period, FWP put a great deal of effort into public outreach at all the stages of plan development and in the first year of implementation. It is very important that the public and other state/federal agencies are aware of the FWP's new role in leading the program, the

continued listed status of wolves, what the federal regulations do and don't allow, etc. In addition, FWP noted that the public's overall awareness about such topics as wolf biology, wolf management challenges, wolf numbers and distribution in Montana, wolf-livestock conflicts, wolf-prey relationships, and human safety was not particularly good.

Throughout the grant period, FWP has given hundreds of presentations and media interviews about wolves, the development of the state's wolf plan, what the plan outlines, the interim legal framework while wolves remain listed, the federal regulations, etc. In 2005 alone, FWP gave approximately 80 formal presentations to around 2000 people. FWP also had countless informal public contacts about the program. FWP gave dozens of briefings to various appointed and elected local, state and federal officials.

FWP also prepared its first Annual Wolf Conservation and Management Program Report for 2005. In addition, FWP redesigned the wolf pages on the FWP website to help fulfill the outreach needs. See [www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf](http://www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf). Examples of additional outreach efforts that FWP completed during the grant period are enclosed.

### **Step-Down Planning for Some Elements of the Wolf Plan//EIS**

The federally approved Montana wolf plan identified two program elements that still needed to be addressed after completion of the plan. One was wolf population monitoring and the other was development of a Montana-based wolf compensation program.

***On developing a Montana wolf compensation program:*** FWP Director Hagener invited a total of about 30 diverse private citizens and state, tribal, and federal agency representatives, and Montana elected officials to participate in a series of 4 work sessions in the spring of 2005. FWP hired a professional facilitator to help the group create a framework to decrease the risk of wolf-livestock losses and to reimburse livestock owners for wolf-caused losses.

In May of 2005, the large working group agreed on guiding principles and the overall framework. However, a smaller subcommittee was formed to work out some of the unresolved issues and details. The Subcommittee met seven times from August 2005 to March 2006 and completed a draft framework. It, along with a couple of press releases documents the accomplishments of this effort.

***On wolf monitoring protocols:*** Wolf managers across the tri-state area have been engaged in ongoing effort to outline consistent wolf monitoring methods and field protocols that will eventually be addressed in a Service proposal to delist wolves. FWP developed a draft protocol that is currently being reviewed. In addition, an interagency group of wolf program leaders from Yellowstone National Park, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, and the Service met in May and again in June 2006 to review data, proposed methods etc. A peer-reviewed publication is in preparation.

A component of the FWP wolf monitoring effort being designed right now incorporates public wolf reports. FWP currently solicits input from the public by asking them to report observations of wolves or wolf signs. FWP provides a way for the public to submit wolf reports electronically through the FWP website wolf pages. Those reports are forwarded to the field staff where they can be compiled and used to prioritize fieldwork. Pre-printed postcards are also widely available for the public to convey information about wolf sightings back to FWP.

### **Variances**

None to report.

## **Expenditure Recap**

Proposed:

	Federal Share		Match		Total
Direct Costs	49,550.00		16,517.00		66,067.00
Indirect @ 20%	9,910.00		3,303.00		13,313.00
Total	\$ 59,460.00	75.0%	\$ 19,820.00	25.0%	\$ 79,280.00

Actual:

	Federal Share		Match		Total
Direct Costs	49,584.09		19,600.00		69,184.09
Indirect (various rates)	9,220.40				9,220.40
Total	58,804.49	75.0%	19,600.00	25.0%	78,404.49

Detail:

	Expenditures
<b>Federal \$ Direct:</b>	
Personal Services Contracts	16,898.03
Travel (FWP staff & Wolf Advisory Council)	13,599.70
Operating Expenses (printing)	13,458.47
Materials	3,422.40
Other Expenses (training, communications, maintenance)	2,205.49
TOTAL	49,584.09
Match \$ Direct:	19,600.00
In the form of -	
Travel reimbursement for private citizens participating in collaborative meetings; meeting room rental and food for meetings; travel of FWP staff, printing; FWP staff time	
TOTAL	69,184.09

## **Project Personnel**

Name	Title / Location	E-mail	Phone *
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